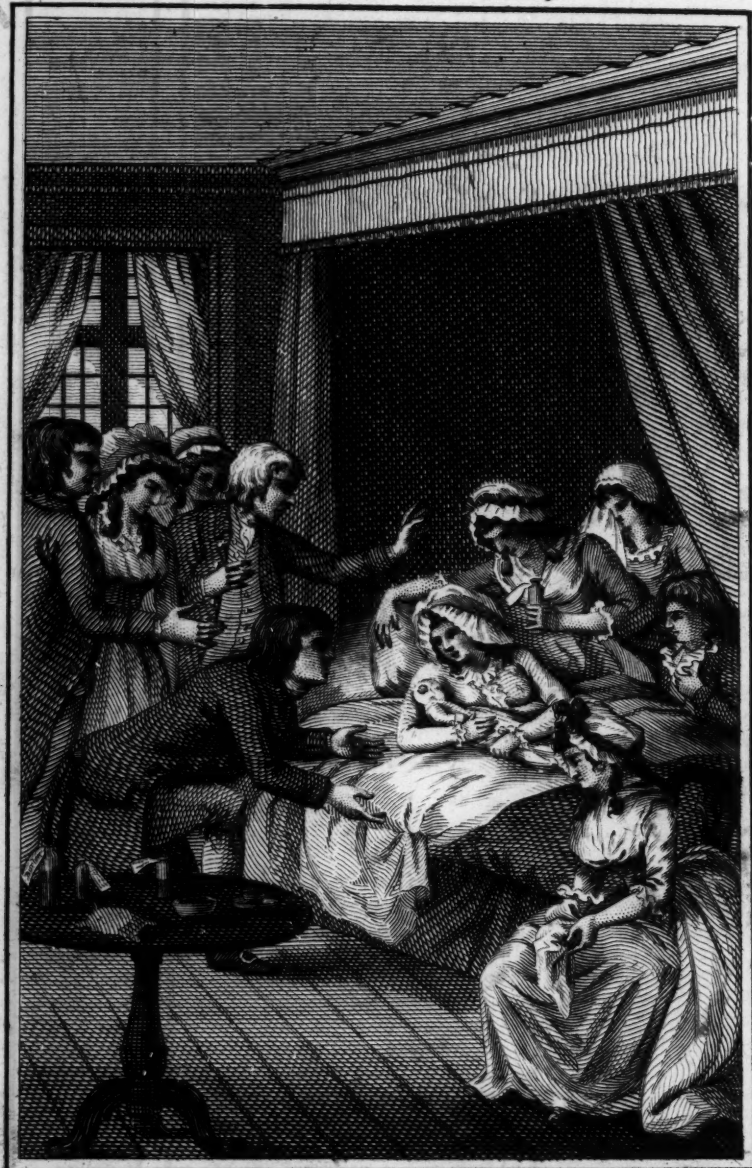


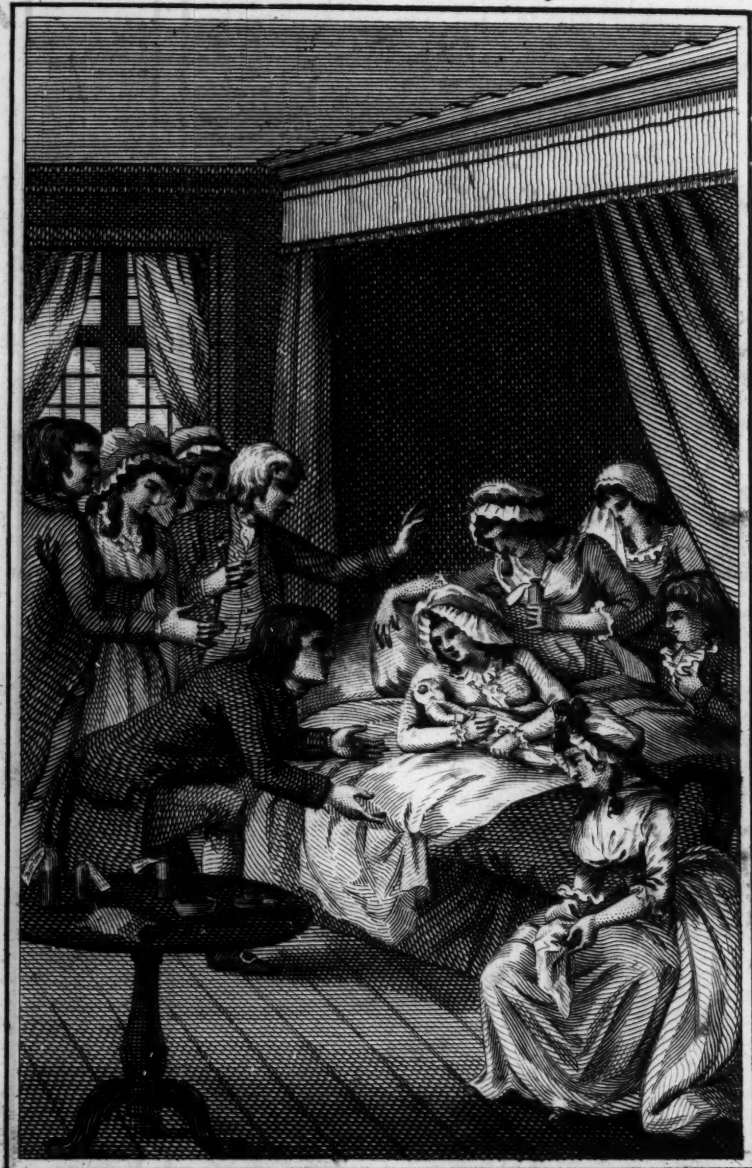
The DEATH of FLAVIA .



J. Barrow delin. & J. Gougeon sculp. London.

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FLAVIA.

— 4 —

4.

AN ANECDOTE.

“ Ye lovely Fair !

“ Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts ;
“ Dare not th’ infectious sigh ; the pleading look,
“ Downcast, and low, in meek submission drest,
“ But full of guile : let not the fervent tongue,
“ Prompt to deceive, with adulation smooth,
“ Gain on your purpos’d will ; nor in the bow’r,
“ Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a couch,
“ While Evening draws her crimson curtains round,
“ Trust your soft minutes with betraying man.”

L O N D O N :

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PLATE

THE



THE
BRITISH MUSEUM

F L A V I A.

“ By Flavia warn’d of flatt’ring swains,
“ Take heed ye easy Fair ;
“ Of vengeance due to broken vows,
“ Ye perjur’d swains beware.”

FLAVIA was the daughter of a tradesman who lived thirty years since in the city of Norwich. She was his eldest child ; and by her duteous awe, and tender solicitude for her parent, stood the most eminent in his affection.

Her person was rather beautiful than otherwise ; her manners graceful and pleasing ; her disposition chearful and gay ; till

“ Luckless love and pining care,
“ Impair’d her rosy hue.”

In the same neighbourhood dwelled Lothario, the youngest son of a person in the same line of life as Flavia’s father. By his parents he was suffered to indulge in all the indolence and foppery of fashion ; and, with a propensity to dress and dissipation, he soon commenced a *beau garçon*, or in plain English—a coxcomb.

Flavia

Flavia with all her virtues unhappily possessed a yielding credulity; the gay appearance of Lothario, which often presented itself before her eyes inflamed her heart; and she could not help regarding him above his fellows.

Lothario had marked her out for an object of seduction: her beauty and innocence but inflamed his lust; and he considered her a conquest that would add fresh laurels to his fame. He had discernment enough to see the foible of the unhappy maid, and he took his measures accordingly. Flavia was delighted with the attention he paid her. She heard with pleasure his vows and protestations; and placing too much confidence in his insidious professions—she fell.

The fruit of their guilty commerce was soon visible. Flavia alarmed, requested her lover in the most pathetic manner, to confirm his vows; and he, melted by her distress, felt, for the first time, an alarm of conscience, which sometimes arises in the breast of the most abandoned libertine.

But an unlucky accident happened, that baffled the unfortunate creature's warmest wishes. Her father in a fit of inebriety, had a short time before quarrelled with the parents of his daughter's seducer, which had sown the seeds of discord between the elders of the two families.

One evening, while he was giving his child some proofs of his affection, he by accident discovered her situation. In a paroxysm of his rage he vent-
ed imprecations, and spurned her from him; but when his passion had subsided, the tenderness of
the

the father prevailed, and he raised her from his feet, with tears of pity and forgiveness.

Love for his Flavia, induced him to sue for a reconciliation with Lothario's parents, and to offer an advantageous marriage portion; but to his intreaties they were inexorable; and, to prevent an union, under the pretence of sending Lothario to the West-Indies, he was dispatched to London, where new scenes and new pleasures soon erased from his mind the idea of the unfortunate Flavia.

By this time the story had spread abroad, and she was exposed a prey to the taunts of severity, and the cruelty of slander. All these Flavia felt most sensibly; but encouraged by the frequent letters of Lothario, who had address enough to persuade her of his constancy, she supported herself against the malice of the world, and yet hoped that she might be happy with her perfidious seducer. From him, time and amusement gradually wore off the remembrance of his deceived Flavia: his epistles grew less frequent; and after the expiration of some months he returned to Norwich, in a perfect state of *nonchalance* for the victim of his falsehood.

When Flavia heard of his arrival, her heart fluttered, and she hourly expected his presence; but when she found that he treated her with contempt, and refused seeing her, every delusive hope vanished, and she fell into the bitterest agonies.

“ Is this (said she) return for my love? and shall he, for whom I bear all this load of reproach and calumny, treat me with disdain? Now, indeed, am I wretched, and my cup of sorrow is filled!”

Under

Under this agony of mind, the time of her delivery drew near. In that hour of trouble it was condoling to her to meet with the tenderness of a reconciled parent, and the assistance of one of the faculty, eminent for his skill and humanity. She brought forth a son in trouble; and while she wept over it with a mother's fondness, she cast a sigh for its perjur'd father.

For some days she did well; but her perturbation of mind, and the load of sorrow she had sustained, overcame her weak frame, and her last hour approached, which the worthy apothecary who attended her, declared was occasioned by the most incurable of diseases——*a broken heart!*

The night before her death she assembled her relations around her, and addressed them in a solemn and pathetic speech, that went most forcibly to their hearts.

By assistance, she was raised in her bed. “ I feel (said she) that I shall not long be with you : the hand of death hangs heavy—to one who has felt the rod of affliction, like me, death can be no unwelcome harbinger. I embrace him as the minister of relief ; and could the little wretch, who owes its being to a guilty father accompany me, happy would be the end of Flavia.”

She then directed that her child should be brought to her. She received the infant, and wept over it in a manner that melted the hearts of the bystanders.

“ I quit thee, my child ; (she added) I leave thee to a world of ingratitude and deceit : but O ! mayest thou

thou escape the misfortunes of thy mother; and boast a heart more noble than thy father's. Never mayest thou send the unsuspecting virgin to the grave; nor the curse of guilt and perjury light on thy head. To you (and she called her sister's husband) I commit this precious charge, for its wretched mother's sake: Horatius, foster and protect it; and may the blessing of heaven descend on it and thee, when I am insensible and forgotten!"

Horatius received the child; and "albeit unused to the melting mood, his soul poured forth at his eyes, while in interrupted accents, he pledged his protection.

"My Father, (said the dying Flavia, to the old man who stood weeping at her bed-side) accept, my loved, my ever honoured parent, my last gratitude for all your love and generosity. Weep not for your poor Flavia, for her who has tainted your remaining years with bitterness: she is going to a better world, where are no perjured lovers. Live, my Father, for the sake of your other children, and rejoice that your Flavia ceases from her misery. The God of mercy has pardoned my frailties, and claims me as his own. May he before whom I am joyfully going, listen to my last prayer—May he comfort and prosper you all, and bless—O! may he bless—my child!"

At these words expired the lovely Flavia. And here let me draw a veil over the sorrow of her friends, and the concern of all who knew her and heard her sad story, while I execrate that libertinism which snatched an amiable young creature from her friends, and sent her untimely to the grave.

I was

I was then a young man, but am now an old one, and the remaining locks that cover my aged head, have been long since grey; but I remember I then wept, and had you been there, Reader, you would have wept too, had you seen the funeral procession---had you seen the hoary grief-worn father, with silent trembling step, attending his loved daughter's remains to the grave,—murdered by base art and cruel resentment.

Thus fell poor Flavia, in the bloom of youth and beauty! and may her sad example inculcate in the minds of the young females of the present day, that too much caution cannot be used before those who so earnestly labour, with mean and unmanly art, to rob them of all that is valuable—their honour—and in our modern youths, that however ensnared by fashion or example, they may consider it a glorious atchievement to render an unsuspecting female miserable, and ruin the peace of private families; yet that it is the highest species of guilt and cowardice; and that the just hand of heaven is ever ready to punish the wretch who, under the insidious mask of love, perpetrates the most atrocious deeds of meanness and villany.



F I N I S.

